



H.R. 2429 - To amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide an exception to the 60-day limit on Medicare reciprocal billing arrangements between two physicians during the period in which one of the physicians is ordered to active duty as a member of a reserve component of the Armed Forces

Floor Situation

H.R. 2429 is being considered on the floor under suspension of the rules and will require a two-thirds majority vote for passage. This legislation was introduced by Representative Mike Thompson (D-CA) on May 22, 2007. The bill was referred to the Committee on Ways and Means, but has not been considered.

H.R. 2429 is expected to be considered on the floor on May 23, 2007.

Background

Under current law, a physician who is absent from his/her practice, for any length of time and for any reason, is permitted to hire another doctor to fill in for them while they are gone. These 2 doctors then enter into a reciprocal billing arrangement, which allows the replacement doctor to bill Medicare for services with payments going to the physician who owns the practice. These arrangements allow physicians to keep their practices running despite absences.

However, these arrangements are limited to 60 days. At the end of a 60 day period of absence, a physician must find a different doctor to cover their practice, and so on every 60 days.

Physicians in the Reserves and Guard are getting called up for active duty and are serving for more than 60 days. It is difficult and expensive for these physicians to line up multiple replacement physicians to fill in for the duration of their absence, especially for those physicians who live in rural areas.

As a result of this, they lose their patients to other doctors/practices or the patient effectively goes without seeing a doctor.

Summary

H.R. 2429 exempts the 60-day limit for physicians entering a reciprocal billing arrangement who are called up for active duty military service and are away from their practice for more than 60 days. Under this legislation, physicians will be able to find just

one replacement physician, instead of multiple physicians, to fill in for them for the entire duration of their active duty service.

CBO Estimate

The Congressional Budget Office has not scored this legislation.

Staff Contact

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